

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T MADRID 3801

EXDIS

LISBON FOR THE VICE PRESIDETN PARTY

E.O.11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: OVIP SP (MONDALE, WALTER F)
SUBJECT: VICE PREDISENT MONDALE VISIT EVALUTION OF FOREIGN MINISTER
MARCELINO OREJA

1. THE FOLLOWING IS AN EMBASSY APPRECIATION OF FOREIGN
MINISTER MARCELINO OREJA TO SUPPLEMENT THE NORMAL BIOGRPAHIC
MATERIAL FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT TRIP TO MADRID. THE
VICE PRESIDENT HAS MET OREJA IN WASHINGTON BUT WILL
PROBABLY HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NO MORE THAN CASUAL
CONVERSATION WITH IN THEIS VISIT, BUT OTHERS IN THE
OFFICALIS PARTY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO
TALK AT MORE LENGTH WITH HIM.

2. OREJA'S ASSOCIATION WITH AMERICANS BEGAN IN THE VERY
LAST YEARS OF THE FRANCO REGIME WHEN HE WAS A LEADER OF THE
MODERATE "TACITO" GROUP OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AND
TECHNOCRATS WHICH WROTE ON TABOO POLIICAL SUBJECTS IN THE
CATHOLIC ORIENTED DAILY NEWSPAPER "YA" AND THEREBY
EARNED THE DISPLEASURE OF FRANCO AND CLOSE ASSOCIATES
WE KNOW OREJA TO BE BRIGHTN AMBITIOUS AND PERSONALLY
FRIENDLY TO AMERICANS IN GOOD PART BECAUSE AMERICANS

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PAID ATTENTION TO HIM WHEN HE WAS UNPOPULAR IN FRANCOLOAND.
THE AMBASSADOR HAS DEALTH FREQUENTLY WITH OREJA FROM THE
TIME HE BECAME UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
(DURING AREILZA'S TENURE IN THE ARIAS CABINET) AND SINCE
HE HAS BEEN MINISTER.

3. WE FIND HIM FRIEDNLY, FRANNK ON SOME ISSUES LESS SO ON

OTHERS. HE IS AN ADVOCATE, IN PART FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS OF SPAIN'S JOINING NATO BUT IS UNDERSTANDABLY GUARDED ABOUT THIS IN PUBLIC. HE PERCEIVES CORRECTLY THE LINKAGE BETWEEN SPAIN'S BECOMING A FULL MEMBER OF THE WESTERN COMMUNITY AND THE ABILITY OF THE DEMOCRATIC MINDED POLITICIANS IN SPAIN TO PROTECT SPAIN'S NASCENT, PRECARIOUSLY DEMOCRACY. IN CONTRAST HE HAS BEEN LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE RENEWAL OF THE CONTRACT FOR THE RADIO LIBERTY INSTALLATIONS IN SPAIN, PERHAPS REFLECTING THE GENERAL FOREIGN MINISTRY WISH THAT THIS ISSUE GO AWAY RATHER THAN PERSONAL CONVICTION SO THAT THIS PERCEPTION MAY CHANGE ONCE ELECTIONS ARE PAST. WE JUDGE THAT HE IS TORN BETWEEN THE BELIEF THAT SPAIN SHOULD HAVE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND THE BELIEF THAT IT IS QUITE INCONVENIENT FOR SPAIN TO DO SO, AT LEAST BEFORE MORE PROGRESS TOWARDS A MID EAST SETTLEMENT GOVERN THE PROBABLE ARAB REACTION.

4. OREJA IS A CAREER DIPLOMAT, BUT HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME IN PRIVATE PURSUITS, INCLUDING POLITICS HE IS, IN HIS OWN WORDS A CIVILIZED CONSERVATIVE IN WESTERN EUROPEAN TERMS BUT HERE HE SEEMS MORE LIBERAL BECAUSE HE IS CLEARLY AN ADVOCATE OF A FULLY DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. WHEN AREILZA LEFT THE CABINET IN HIGH DUDGEON OVER BEING PASSED OVER IN FAVOR OF SUAREZ FOR THE PRIME MINISTER OREJA WAS PERSONALLY PERSUADED BY THE KING TO TAKE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. (THE KING AND HE ARE FRIENDS FROM BOYHOOD). AREILZA WAS A HARD ACT TO FOLLOW. STILL, OREJA HAS GAINED THE RESPECT OF THE
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DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY HERE, AND WE THINK, OF HIS EUROPEAN MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES.

5. WHEN HE BECAME FOREIGN MINISTER HE WAS THOUGHT TO BE ONE OF THE MAJOR POLITICAL MINISTERS. IN THE EARLY GOING HE WAS INTERNALLY INVOLVED IN THE DECISION MAKING POLICY ON CRUCIAL POLITICAL REFORM ISSUES. BUT FOR THE LAST FEW MONTHS HE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN EASED OUT OF HIS POLITICAL ROLE, IN PART SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THE DEMANDS ON HIS TIME DUE TO SPAIN'S VERY ACTIVE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SCHEDULE. (BUT THIS DOES NOT ENTIRELY EXPLAIN HIS SHIFT AWAY FROM AN OVERT POLITICAL ROLE). OREJA IS A BASQUE AND FEELS VERY MUCH HIS BASQUENESS (EVEN THOUGH HE DOES NOT SPEAK THAT LANGUAGE, BECAUSE FRANCO DID NOT PERMIT IT TO BE TAUGHT WHILE HE WAS GROWING UP). HE WILL BE UNDOUBTEDLY BE QUITE CONCERNED ABOUT THE RECENT RESURGENCE OF VIOLENCE IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY.

6. THE FOREIGN MINISTER IS A HARD WORKER WHO, DESPITE

THE STRAINS OF HIS SCHEDULE AND OF MANAGING HIS UNDER
STAFFED MINISTRY, RETAINS HIS NATURAL BOUNCE AND ENTHUSIASM.
HE SEEMS A SURE BET TO REMAIN IN HIS POST AFTER
APPOINTMENT TO SENATE SEAT BY THE KING) IF, AS EVERY
ONW EXPECTS THE ELECTIONS RESULT RETAIN SUAREZ IN THE
PRIME MINISTRY. HE SPEAKS GOOD EGLAISH.STABLER

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